

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 5 1. A method comprising:
 - selecting a subset of a plurality of characteristics from a plurality of records based on a model norm; and
 - preparing a report with the subset.
- 10 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - ordering the subset of the plurality of characteristics in the report based on a relative significance in the model norm.
- 15 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - ordering the plurality of records in the report based on a sort rule in the model norm.
- 20 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the preparing the report further comprises:
 - preparing extra characteristics not in the subset in a least-significant column of the report as a sequence of name-value pairs.
- 25 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the preparing extra characteristics further comprises:
 - ordering the name-value pairs based on a relative significance in a favored norm.
- 30 6. An apparatus comprising:
 - means for selecting a subset of a plurality of characteristics from a plurality of records based on a model norm;
 - means for preparing a report with the subset; and
 - means for ordering the subset of the plurality of characteristics in the report based on a relative significance in the model norm.

7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the means for preparing further comprises:
means for preparing extra characteristics not in the subset in a least-significant
column of the report as a sequence of name-value pairs.

5 8. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the means for preparing further comprises:
means for preparing extra characteristics not in the subset in a series of columns
ordered based on a relative significance in a favored norm.

9. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the means for preparing further comprises:
10 means for preparing an indicator of whether extra characteristics not in the subset
are available.

10. The apparatus of claim 6, further comprising:
means for ordering the plurality of records in the report based on a sort rule in the
15 model norm.

11. A signal-bearing medium encoded with instructions, wherein the instructions when
executed comprise:
selecting a subset of a plurality of characteristics from a plurality of records
20 received from one of a plurality of information suppliers, wherein the selecting of the
subset is based on a model norm;
preparing a first report with the subset; and
creating a second report based on a favored norm associated with a selected
record from the first report.

25 12. The signal-bearing medium of claim 11, wherein the preparing further comprises:
ordering the subset of the plurality of characteristics in the first report based on a
relative significance in the model norm.

30 13. The signal-bearing medium of claim 11, wherein the preparing further comprises:

ordering the plurality of records in the first report based on a sort rule in the model norm.

14. The signal-bearing medium of claim 11, wherein the creating further comprises:

5 ordering the subset of the plurality of characteristics in the second report based on a relative significance in the favored norm.

15. The signal-bearing medium of claim 11, wherein the creating further comprises:

10 ordering the plurality of records in the second report based on a sort rule in the favored norm.

16. An electronic device comprising:

 a processor; and

15 a storage device encoded with instructions, wherein the instructions when executed on the processor comprise:

 selecting a first subset of a plurality of characteristics from a plurality of records received from a plurality of information suppliers, wherein the selecting the first subset is based on a model norm,

 preparing a first report with the first subset,

20 ordering the first subset of the plurality of characteristics in the first report based on a relative significance in the model norm, and

 ordering the plurality of records in the first report based on a sort rule in the model norm.

25 17. The electronic device of claim 16, wherein the instructions further comprise:

 receiving a favored norm from one of the plurality of information suppliers, wherein the one of the plurality of information suppliers is associated with a selected record in the first report;

30 selecting a second subset of the plurality of characteristics from the plurality of records, wherein the selecting the second subset is based on the favored norm; and
 creating a second report with the second subset.

18. The electronic device of claim 17, wherein the creating further comprises:
ordering the second subset in the second report based on a relative significance in the favored norm.

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19. The electronic device of claim 17, wherein the creating further comprises:
ordering the plurality of records in the second report based on a sort rule in the favored norm.

10 20. The electronic device of claim 16, wherein the instructions further comprise:
propagating the plurality of records with a default value specified in the model norm if the plurality of records lack a value.